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Right to education

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolutions 8/4 and 26/17, the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Kishore Singh.

* A/71/150.
** The present report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 8/4 and 26/17, is devoted to lifelong learning and the right to education. The Special Rapporteur sheds light on the vision and concept of lifelong learning and highlights the emergence of the "right to learning", intertwined with the right to education and training as a social right. He also examines State responsibility, along with that of other social partners, for its realization and underlines the key importance placed on lifelong learning in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Special Rapporteur also looks at the special role that devolves upon technical and vocational education and training for skills development and analyses the issues in financing lifelong learning. Finally, the Special Rapporteur offers a set of recommendations with a view to promoting learning as a right and its pursuit from a lifelong learning perspective, in keeping with State obligations as set out in international human rights instruments.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 8/4 and 26/17. The report is devoted to lifelong learning and the right to education. The Special Rapporteur sheds light on the vision and concept of lifelong learning and highlights the emergence of the "right to learning" and its various dimensions, intertwined with the right to education and training as a social right. He also examines State responsibility, along with that of other social partners, for its realization as laid down in international human rights instruments. The report underlines the importance placed on lifelong learning in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with commitments by Governments to advancing progressively their education systems in that direction. Considering skills development a high priority, the Special Rapporteur looks at the special role that devolves upon technical and vocational education and training from a lifelong learning perspective. He analyses the issues surrounding the financing of lifelong learning, and initiatives being taken at the national level. Finally, the Special Rapporteur offers a set of recommendations with a view to promoting learning as a right and its pursuit from a lifelong learning perspective.

II. Activities undertaken by the Special Rapporteur during the reporting period

2. During the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur undertook missions to Chile and Fiji and reported to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-second session. At that session, he presented his thematic report on the right to education in the digital age, with a focus on higher education (A/HRC/32/37), to the Human Rights Council. In that report, he examined how education in the digital age must protect and respect the right to education.

3. The Special Rapporteur participated in a number of public events on education and continued collaborating with States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

4. On 28 July 2015, the Special Rapporteur participated in an online workshop on the challenges of public-private partnerships in realizing the right to education in Oxford, hosted by the Oxford Human Rights Hub and the Open Society Foundations. The workshop served as a global expert consultation on issues relevant to the Special Rapporteur's 2015 report to the General Assembly.

5. On 18 and 19 August, the Special Rapporteur participated in the 2015 China Xinjiang Development Forum. In his address at the opening ceremony, he underlined the importance of the Forum in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and skills development and international cooperation.

6. On 21 August, he addressed the opening ceremony of the international symposium on the theme "Grassland silk road and the world civilization", organized by the Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences in Hohhot, in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. He highlighted the significance of the symposium in providing a better appreciation of the richness of intangible heritage.

7. On 26 August, he delivered a talk on the right to education to members and students of the Indian Law Institute in New Delhi. On 5 September, he gave a public

lecture on the theme "The right to education: contemporary issues and challenges for emerging and developing countries" at the Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, also in New Delhi.

8. On 8 September, he participated in a high-level panel organized as part of the International Literacy Day celebrations at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris. In his address, he elaborated on literacy as a right as part of lifelong learning, with special focus on conceptual issues in view of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

9. From 30 September to 2 October, the Special Rapporteur was invited to address the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, where he gave a series of lectures on the right to education in its interface with international law. On 1 October, he gave the opening address at a conference on educational legislation at the Institute of Legislation and Comparative Law under the Government of the Russian Federation, in Moscow, and on 4 October, he gave a lecture at Kutafin Moscow State Law University on the right to education.

10. On 12 and 13 October, he participated in the international seminar on human rights education convened by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Government of Indonesia in Jakarta. His address focused on the need to promote human rights education through public education policies.

11. On 26 October, he addressed the opening session of the fourth International Scientific Congress on Global Studies, organized on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations at Lomonosov Moscow State University. He highlighted the challenges of globalization, underlining the importance of upholding the ideals and principles of the United Nations, and the central role of education.

12. On 27 and 28 October, the Special Rapporteur addressed the plenary session of the BRICS Global University Summit: Education as a Source of Global Development, organized in Moscow on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations by the Moscow State Institute of International Relations and the consortium of leading Russian universities. He spoke on the right to education, including skills development, the need to regulate privatization, especially in higher education institutions, and safeguarding the humanistic mission of education.

13. On 4 November, the Special Rapporteur gave the closing address at the Education 2030 high-level meeting organized by UNESCO during the thirty-eighth session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris. He addressed key challenges, including declining public investment and privatization in education, and emphasized the need for concrete measures to progressively advance towards the Education 2030 agenda.

14. On 17 November, he gave a speech as a special guest at a meeting of senior officials of Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation and South Africa (the BRICS countries) on education, organized by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The meeting aimed to create a BRICS university network. He expounded on the right to higher education and proposed public policy responses for those countries to make education a global force.

15. On 23 November, he addressed the opening session of the regional consultation and dialogue on Education 2030 Framework for Action for West and

Central Africa, organized by the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, together with its partners. On 25 November, he also addressed the closing session of the regional consultation and dialogue.

16. On 3 February 2016, the Special Rapporteur held discussions with Education International on potential collaboration in the campaign on the privatization and commercialization of education. The discussion also addressed approaches in jointly promoting government accountability in education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and collaborating on advocating quality education for all as a fundamental human right.

17. On 15 February, he addressed the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, in New Delhi, on the education policy and legal system of India for a national policy seminar on the theme "Rights-based approach to education: policies, premises and practices".

18. On 10 March, he took part in a discussion on gender equality and international law organized at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on the occasion of International Women's Day. He underlined the need for a human rights-based approach and addressing challenges to women's equitable access to education.

19. On 14 March, the Special Rapporteur participated as a panellist in an event organized by the Permanent Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva during the session of the Human Rights Council, and addressed the education goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

20. On 21 April, he gave a public lecture on social responsibility in higher education at the Manchester International Law Centre, University of Manchester, and highlighted the social function of universities and challenges to fostering professional excellence while serving the community.

21. On 28 April, he interacted with a group of academics and civil society activists at an event organized by the International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education in cooperation with the United Nations Library at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, and exchanged ideas with respect to the right to education and lifelong learning in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On the same day, he held discussions at the International Labour Organization (ILO) with some professionals on skills development and technical and vocational education and training, as well as questions related to teacher training and their professional development.

22. On 29 April, the Special Rapporteur addressed the opening session of a high-level panel on apprenticeship organized by the Association apprentissage sans frontières at the Palais des Nations pursuant to his 2012 report to the General Assembly on technical and vocational education and training from a right to education perspective (A/67/310). The panel supported the idea of a declaration on a "dual system" of apprenticeship and the importance of replicating it in developing countries.

23. On 4 May, the Special Rapporteur participated in a high-level panel on financing education in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Education Coalition.

24. On 23 May, he attended the Global Skill Development Meet, organized by the Europe India Foundation for Excellence at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, where he interacted with the organizers and participants on the right to education and on skills development.

25. From 20 to 22 June, he addressed the opening session of the International Conference on the Use of Contract Teachers, convened by the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All in Addis Ababa, highlighting the abusive practices in the employment of teachers in private schools that undermine their status, and the need to regulate this phenomenon.

26. On 23 June, the Special Rapporteur addressed the opening of a conference on the implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025) convened by the African Commission in Addis Ababa. He warned against the mushrooming of privatization leading to violation of the right to education and the need to regulate privatization and ensure that education was safeguarded as a public good.

27. On 27 and 28 June, he addressed a round table on public-private partnerships in crisis-affected and fragile States organized by the Open Society Foundations in New York. Recalling his report on the right to education and public-private partnerships (A/70/342), presented to the General Assembly in October 2015, he underlined the need to preserve social interest in education, as well as to promote international cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

28. On 15 July, the Special Rapporteur gave the inaugural address at a national seminar on the social dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development organized by the Council for Social Development in New Delhi. He underlined the key importance of social justice and equity with social responsibility in education to overcome disparities in access to education.

29. On 20 July, he gave a talk at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, in New Delhi, on financing education and the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda. He emphasized the need to mobilize maximum resources for the realization of the right to education, while recognizing the importance of social responsibility in education, as well as of philanthropy.

30. On 21 July, the Special Rapporteur addressed the opening of an event organized by Education International to launch its report on the privatization of education in India, in particular the negative effects of the initiative by the government of Andhra Pradesh to develop a partnership with Bridge Academy. He called upon public authorities to safeguard education from commercialization.

31. On 26 July, he addressed a high-level panel convened by civil society organizations in Dakar on the Education 2030 agenda and on financing education, and emphasized the key importance of domestic resource mobilization.

32. On 29 and 30 July, the Special Rapporteur participated in a forum on the right to education and several high-level events organized in Haiti by the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education and the Regroupement pour l'éducation pour toutes et pour tous, with the support of the Office of Citizen Protection in Haiti. He spoke with the Minister of National Education, the President of the Senate Education Commission and with civil society organizations about giving paramount

importance to regulating the private schools operating in Haiti without any control by public authorities, and of the key importance of preserving education as a public good.

III. Vision and concept of "lifelong learning"

33. UNESCO has been the progenitor of the vision and the concept of "lifelong learning", and the Special Rapporteur recognizes the importance of drawing upon its work. In the 1970s, reflections by the international community under UNESCO auspices led to a shift in focus from education to learning. This was epitomized by the International Commission on the Development of Education, which in 1971 put forward a vision of "the learning society" and recommended as the guiding principle for educational policies that "every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his [or her] life". Recognizing that "the idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society",[1] the Commission took the view that lifelong education was not an educational system but the principle on which the overall organization of a system was founded, and which should accordingly underlie the development of each of its component parts.

34. The Special Rapporteur commends the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within* ("Delors report"), which brought to the fore the need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education as a continuous process and its importance in providing everyone the opportunity as "an ongoing process of improving knowledge and skills".[2] Learning throughout life was perceived as "the heartbeat of society"[3] and was underpinned by a conception of education in which the formal system was linked to the informal system, in which age was not a barrier to the pursuit of education, and which was centred on four key pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

35. At the turn of the millennium, the UNESCO *World Education Report 2000* was devoted to the topic "The right to education: towards education for all throughout life". It argued that "education" could not be taken to mean only "schooling" and that "the time to learn is now the whole lifetime", thus expanding the concept of lifelong learning. Education is a "continuum, coextensive with life",[4] and in today's globalizing world, it can no longer be defined by a reference to a particular period of life. "Lifelong education" and "lifelong learning" have come to represent in different ways the expectations that societies currently have of education and of the scope that should be provided for every individual to develop his or her potential.[5]

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[1] Edgar Faure and others, *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (Paris, UNESCO; London, George G. Harrap, 1972), p. 181.

[2] UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Paris, 1996), p. 12.

[3] Ibid., p. 20.

[4] UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000: The Right to Education — Towards Education for All throughout Life"* (Paris, 2000), p. 19.

[5] Ibid., p. 55.

36. In addition, the concept was further enriched by the European Commission in its communication on making a European area of lifelong learning a reality.[6] In May 2015, the European Commission announced a sharpened set of priorities for European cooperation in education and training. New priority areas for Education and Training 2020 are underpinned by the lifelong learning concept covering learning in all contexts, whether formal, non-formal or informal, and at all levels.[7]

37. Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages in all life-wide contexts through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Adult learning and education provides a variety of learning pathways and flexible learning opportunities, including second-chance programmes to make up for lack of initial schooling, including for people who have never been to school, early school leavers and dropouts.[8]

38. Universities as centres of learning are diversifying their offers with courses and content tailored to the knowledge and skills needed for the economy. They are thus becoming "the main meeting places for learning throughout life, opening their doors to adults who wish either to resume their studies or to adapt and develop their knowledge or to satisfy their taste for learning in all areas of cultural life".[9] The concept of "education as a continuum" is now intertwined with the "continuum of learning".[10]

39. The Special Rapporteur notes that the conceptual developments highlighted above are consolidated in some definitions of lifelong learning, such as the definition formulated by the European Union: "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons".[11] The Special Rapporteur also emphasizes the significance of the definition of lifelong learning resulting from the normative work of ILO: "the term 'lifelong learning' encompasses all learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications".[12]

40. In this context, the Special Rapporteur underlines the need for further elucidation of the concept of lifelong learning, taking into consideration its three key pillars: education, training and learning. A holistic approach to quality education, giving paramount importance to the humanistic mission of education rather than its instrumental role, and the mere pursuit of material values, should be central to reflection. It is important to recall that the "full development of the human person" is a key objective of the right to education, assigned to it by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by the international conventions in the field of human rights. Pursuit of that objective is a continuously unfolding process covering

[6] Commission of the European Communities, "Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality" (COM(2001) 678 final), 21 November 2001, pp. 10-11.

[7] European Commission, "European education and training cooperation: new priorities". Available from http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/0901-et2020-new-priorities_en.htm.

[8] UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, 13 November 2015.

[9] UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (see footnote 2), p. 25.

[10] Expression employed in the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education.

[11] European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, *Terminology of European Education and Training Policy*, 2nd ed. (Luxembourg, 2014). Available from www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4117.

[12] ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195).

the entire life and depending on educational and learning opportunities. The Special Rapporteur considers that it is the primary function of education to kindle in children a love for learning and a longing for lifelong learning for the sake of personal fulfilment.

IV. Lifelong learning as a right

41. The Special Rapporteur recalls that the normative bases of lifelong learning exist in international human rights treaties. The Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) lays down the obligation of States with regard to continuing education.[13] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in 1966, includes similar provisions. According to article 13 (2) (d) of the Covenant, individuals "who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education" have a right to fundamental education, or basic education as defined in the World Declaration on Education for All (1990). The enjoyment of the right to fundamental education is not limited by age or gender; it extends to children, young people and adults, including older persons. Fundamental education, therefore, is an integral component of adult education and lifelong learning. Because fundamental education is a right of all age groups, curricula and delivery systems suitable for students of all ages must be devised.[14]

Emergence of the "right to lifelong learning"

42. The Special Rapporteur considers it important to take full cognizance of UNESCO normative work in the early 1970s, which led to the emergence of the "right to lifelong learning". The Third International Conference on Adult Education, convened by UNESCO in Tokyo in 1972, provided a conceptual turning point when it declared its belief that "the right of individuals to education, their right to learn and to go on learning, is to be considered on the same basis as their other fundamental rights, such as the right to health and to hygiene, the right to security, the right to all forms of civil liberty, etc."[15]

43. By the end of the 1980s, the idea of a "right to learn" emerged as distinct from that of the "right to education". The Fourth International Conference on Adult Education, held in Paris in 1985, adopted a declaration on the right to learn. Its importance was underlined by the fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, 1997), which declared that "the recognition of the right to education and the right to learn throughout life is more than ever a necessity".[15]

44. The Special Rapporteur also underlines the importance of the work of ILO in supporting the normative bases of lifelong learning, recognizing that "education and training are a right for all" and that, in cooperation with social partners, States should "work towards ensuring access for all to lifelong learning".[12] He notes that

[13] According to the Convention, States have the obligation "to encourage and intensify by appropriate methods the education of persons who have not received any primary education or who have not completed the entire primary education course and the continuation of their education on the basis of individual capacity".

[14] Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 13 (E/C.12/1999/10), paras. 22-24.

[15] UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000* (see footnote 4), p. 58.

such developments were further enriched by UNESCO by endowing the concepts of literacy and adult learning with normative bases. The UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, adopted in November 2015, recognized "adult learning and education as an essential component of the right to education and a key pillar in the education system".

V. Lifelong learning: State obligations and social responsibility

45. In this evolution, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes the importance of giving consideration to the State obligations laid down in international normative instruments. States have the obligation to "develop comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies for adult learning and education in its various forms"[8] according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions.

46. The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation gives expression to State responsibility with respect to lifelong learning in its various dimensions, considering education and training as the "primary responsibility of Government". States should "facilitate lifelong learning" and take "policy measures designed to create decent jobs, as well as to achieve sustainable economic and social development".[12] With the involvement of social partners, they should establish a "national strategy for education and training", as well as a "guiding framework for training policies", and develop and apply entrepreneurial skills.[12] It is incumbent upon Governments to "guarantee equitable access to adult learning and education, and promote broader and sustained participation by fostering a culture of learning throughout life and by minimizing barriers to participation".[8]

A. Right to education as a social right

47. The Special Rapporteur deems it important to recognize that both the individual and society are beneficiaries of the right to education; the right to education is an individual right; and it is also a social right and carries "social responsibility" in education. Education, training and lifelong learning "contribute significantly to promoting the interests of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society as a whole". Thus, the collective responsibility to foster lifelong learning devolves upon key stakeholders: upon Governments to invest and create the conditions to enhance education and training at all levels; upon enterprises to train their employees; and upon individuals to make use of their education, training and lifelong learning opportunities.[12]

48. The communication of the European Commission on making a European area of lifelong learning a reality reflects social responsibility for lifelong learning. It depicts the roles and responsibilities of various actors: public authorities, social partners, learning providers, community and voluntary groups and individuals. As relevant stakeholders, they should work together in partnerships reflecting "the shared benefits of, and responsibility for, lifelong learning".[6]

49. In this respect, communities can play a role in promoting lifelong learning, including in the creation or strengthening of appropriate institutional structures, such as community learning centres, for delivering adult learning and education, and in encouraging adults to use them as hubs for individual learning as well as

community development.[8] Available experience on communities building infrastructure for basic education can be scaled up to lifelong learning processes at the local and regional levels. So-called "learning cities" can improve the lifelong education system so as to encourage vocational colleges, community colleges and open universities to play a greater role in development by providing lifelong learning opportunities.[16] Wider dimension can be given to this by developing "learning cities, towns and villages".[8]

50. Besides the role of communities, the Special Rapporteur is of the view that an important role devolves upon the intellectual community for promoting reflections, research and studies on lifelong learning. The Faculty of Educational Sciences at the Université du Québec à Montréal, as well as the Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche/développement sur l'éducation permanente, furnish an example in this respect.[17] The intellectual community, as well as civil society organizations,[18] can raise public debate on key issues for promoting lifelong learning.

B. Lifelong learning and corporate responsibility

51. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes the role and responsibility that devolves upon the corporate sector in lifelong learning, especially in the process of realizing the right to training and skills development. Employers have the main responsibility to provide for developing the competences of their workforce and can take on wider corporate social responsibilities, for example when they open up their training opportunities and resources to a wider public. They have a vital role in providing work experience opportunities.[12] Employers' responsibility for education, training and lifelong learning for workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, in the informal economy, in the rural sector and in self-employment deserves special consideration.

52. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur commends the position taken by ILO with regard to corporate social responsibility and the call upon multinational enterprises "to provide training for all levels of their employees in home and host countries, to meet the needs of the enterprises and contribute to the development of the country".[12]

C. Lifelong learning and its interface with other human rights

53. Lifelong learning has developed not only from a right to education perspective; its development manifests a broader human rights-based approach, linking lifelong learning to other human rights. UNESCO recognizes that "in the framework of lifelong learning, ... literacy and adult learning and education contribute to the realization of the right to education that enables adults to exercise other economic, political, social and cultural rights".[8] The aim of adult learning and education is to empower people in that perspective.

[16] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, report of the second International Conference on Learning Cities, Mexico City, 28-30 September 2015.

[17] See www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1oDYFKrfP8 and www.youtube.com/watch?v=76rT9ceNgKc on leaning throughout life and multiple ways to learning. See also www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzA9nCQCWjQ.

[18] See the report of the fourth World Forum on Lifelong Learning, Paris, 5 and 6 February 2015.

54. Education and training for lifelong learning involve "the rights and obligations of all concerned under labour-related laws and other forms of labour regulation".[12] Public authorities are responsible for active labour market measures for the unemployed, and for promoting learning for all, both within and outside the labour market. As noted by the European Commission, trade unions increasingly deliver learning to their members and participate in activities to promote and facilitate learning among members and non-members alike. Together, social partners conduct social dialogue at all levels and negotiate and implement agreements in respect of education and training in the workplace.[19]

55. Considerations pertaining to labour law are especially important as regards agreements between providers of learning opportunities and their beneficiaries. For example, the Workers Vocational Skills Development Act (2010) in the Republic of Korea has the objective of promoting and stabilizing the employment of workers, raising their social and economic status, improving the productivity of enterprises and thus contributing to social and economic development by promoting and supporting workers' skills development throughout their lives, training the skilled and technical workforces required by industries and conducting projects for industry-academia collaboration, among others.

VI. Lifelong learning and the national legal system

56. The right to education must be incorporated into national Constitutions and legal systems so that its normative framework can be operationalized.

A. Constitutional provisions

57. The Special Rapporteur underlines the importance of the constitutional bases of lifelong learning. For example, in the Republic of Korea, it is the constitutional obligation of the State to promote "lifelong education" (art. 31 (5)). The Framework Act on Education[20] of the Republic of Korea introduced the right of every citizen to learn throughout life. The country also adopted the Lifelong Education Act.[21] In Argentina, the right to learn is enshrined in article 14 of the national Constitution of 22 August 1994. The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines encourages the development of non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as the provision of adult education and vocational training.

B. National laws

58. The Special Rapporteur notes that lifelong learning is also reflected in education laws. For example, the General Education Act No. 18.437 (2008) of Uruguay[22] enshrines education as a fundamental human right in its article 1 and provides that the State shall guarantee and promote quality education for all its

[19] Commission of the European Communities, "Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality" (see footnote 6), p. 10.

[20] See www.moleg.go.kr/english/korLawEng?pstSeq=52143.

[21] See www.moleg.go.kr/english/korLawEng?pstSeq=52187.

[22] See www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/58baed0210eec2bac6760c53f1316bfa470a2e99.pdf.

inhabitants, all throughout life, facilitating continuing education. In Finland, the Government instituted a decree in 2009, creating the Council for Lifelong Learning, an expert body operating within the Ministry of Education to foster cooperation between the world of education and work and to further improve the conditions for lifelong learning and adult education.[23]

C. Lifelong learning, social policies and education strategies

59. Lifelong learning figures in the education plans and strategies of several countries, for example the strategy for lifelong learning of Denmark,[24] adopted in 2007, which is aimed at promoting lifelong learning in all parts of society and in all areas in which the knowledge, skills and competences of people are developed and put to use.[25] In Jamaica, the national development plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica, is aimed at empowering individuals "to learn for life" so as to be creative and productive.[26]

60. The National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development of Australia[27] introduced a national training entitlement for government-subsidized training to at least the Certificate III qualification, with a view to ensuring that working-age Australians without qualifications can obtain the skills that they need to work in higher-skilled jobs.

61. Developing continuing education and building a lifelong education and training system that benefits all people, with open sharing of education resources, is the objective of the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) of China.[28] A national plan for modernizing the national education system is aimed at building a basic framework for lifelong education, so that everyone can be taught what they want to learn, excel at what they learn, and put what they have learned to use.[29]

62. The Special Rapporteur considers it important for developing countries to take steps with a view to developing laws and education policies that embody the concept of lifelong learning. Public authorities must also "take the lead in developing and implementing lifelong learning strategies"[19] grounded in such a legal and policy framework.

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[23] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: Rethinking Literacy* (Hamburg, 2013), p. 46. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002224/222407E.pdf.

[24] Jan Reitz Jørgensen, ed., *Denmark's Strategy for Lifelong Learning: Education and Lifelong Skills Upgrading for All* (Denmark, Danish Ministry of Education, 2007). Available from http://pub.uvm.dk/2007/lifelonglearning/lifelong_learning.pdf.

[25] Ibid., p. 8.

[26] Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan* (Kingston, 2009), pp. 57-58. Available from www.vision2030.gov.jm/National-Development-Plan.

[27] See www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/skills/national-partnership/skills-reform_NA.pdf.

[28] See www.china-un.org/eng/zt/China123456/.

[29] See http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/china-2010-abstract-lll-strategy.pdf.

VII. Lifelong learning and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

63. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes the need for national-level measures in view of the importance assigned to lifelong learning in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the 2030 Agenda calls upon Member States to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". That Goal includes 10 targets, 3 of which call in part for greater lifelong learning options. States are required, by 2030, to "ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy". They must also "substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship". Finally, States are called upon to "ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development".

64. The Special Rapporteur considers that the political and moral commitments made by Governments in adopting the Incheon Declaration[30] at the World Education Forum in May 2015 impart enhanced significance to lifelong learning. Paragraph 10 of the Incheon Declaration expresses the commitment of Governments "to promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education. This includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance. In addition, the provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education, is important." In the same paragraph, Governments have made further commitments to "ensuring that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire life skills, and that they are provided with adult learning, education and training opportunities".

65. The Special Rapporteur underlines the importance of keeping lifelong learning as a continuous policy objective, without limiting it to a specific time frame. Lifelong learning in 2030 will become ever more important. However, time-bound targets for lifelong learning are necessary as benchmarks for measuring the progress towards realization of the Education 2030 agenda, which includes "equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training".

VIII. Skills development perspective throughout life and technical and vocational education and training

66. Technical and vocational education and training systems are crucial to equip all youth and adults with knowledge, skills and competencies and promote entrepreneurship and lifelong learning,[31] and their importance to skills development must be fully recognized. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur recalls the

[30] See https://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration.

[31] UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training, 13 November 2015.

provisions in the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989), according to which technical and vocational education and training consists of "all forms and levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life" (art. 1 (a)).

A. Technical and vocational education and training and the linkage between the right to education and the right to work

67. Technical and vocational education and training cuts across formal or school-based, non-formal or enterprise-based, and informal or traditional apprenticeship. It has a nexus with the right to education and the right to work and is valuable in providing "retraining for adults whose current knowledge and skills have become obsolete owing to technological, economic, employment, social or other changes".[32] Such education and training can enable vocational trainees to acquire further professional competence and improve their skills and competencies. Numerous initiatives taken in all regions of the world to introduce reforms in technical and vocational education and training systems are propelled by a variety of skill requirements in the rapidly changing economies of the twenty-first century and involve lifelong learning. In India, inspired by the vision of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, of a "skilled India", efforts are being made to align the "demands of the employers for a well-trained skilled workforce with aspirations of Indian citizens for sustainable livelihoods". With the launch of the national skill development mission (*kaushal vikas yogna*), a national skill development and entrepreneurship policy was adopted in 2015 for that purpose.[33]

68. The Moscow Declaration adopted at the meeting of the Ministers of Education of Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation and South Africa on 18 November 2015 expresses the commitment of those countries in the field of technical and vocational education and training to "promote lifelong learning and encourage self-education through both formal and informal modes, and strive towards a state of excellence".

69. Technical and vocational education and training is instrumental in work-based learning and continuing professional development, which are necessary in confronting the challenges of unemployment and underemployment, both in developed and developing countries. Ensuring such education and training that is adequate and relevant is central to responding to the diverse aspirations and needs of individuals and societies in a rapidly globalizing world.

[32] Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 13, para. 16.

[33] India, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, *National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015* (New Delhi, 2015). Available from www.skilldevelopment.gov.in/National-Policy-2015.html.

B. Technical and vocational education and training through an overall lifelong learning framework

70. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the perspective developed in looking at technical and vocational education and training through an overall lifelong learning framework.[31] He considers that the provisions in the ILO Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) remain relevant at present. Article 4 of the Convention stipulates that "each Member shall gradually extend, adapt and harmonize its vocational training systems to meet the needs for vocational training throughout life of both young persons and adults in all sectors of the economy and branches of economic activity and at all levels of skill and responsibility". The Convention enjoins on Member States the obligation to adopt and develop comprehensive and coordinated policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training, which shall encourage and enable all persons "to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in accordance with their own aspirations, account being taken of the needs of society" (art. 1 (5)).

C. Making technical and vocational education and training professionally coveted and valorising its social esteem

71. The Special Rapporteur notes that quality is at the heart of the European Union programme Education and Training 2020. Underpinned by the lifelong learning concept, this covers learning in all contexts, whether formal, non-formal or informal, and at all levels. Relevant and high-quality skills and competences for employability, innovation, active citizenship and transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications are part of six new priority areas for Education and Training 2020.[7]

72. Technical and vocational education and training is especially important for developing countries, where, instead of being an integral part of education, vocational training remains a separate stream. Such education and training is least coveted and does not enjoy social esteem. Moreover, in most countries the collaboration of industry with the technical and vocational education and training system is very weak, with feeble links between industry and technical and vocational education and training institutions systems.

73. The Special Rapporteur therefore deems the establishment of lasting links between technical education and training institutions and enterprises essential for the system to better respond to skills demands and to make it better able to contribute to industrial development. He also deems the approaches in developed countries, especially regarding the "dual system" of apprenticeships (in schools and in companies under an agreed framework), highly relevant to the developing countries. The developing countries need to place a strong focus on policies that are oriented towards replicating rather than duplicating such approaches for skills development.

IX. National qualifications framework

74. The Special Rapporteur notes the considerable attention being given to developing "a national qualifications framework" for "the assessment, certification

and recognition"[12] of skills and competencies acquired in the course of lifelong learning. The establishment of national qualifications frameworks and the adoption of national assessment systems for learning achievements in multiple settings denote the value attached to the pursuit of lifelong learning.

A. Recognition, validation and accreditation

75. Recognition, validation and accreditation of knowledge, skills and competences obtained in various settings make lifelong learning rewarding for individuals. This provides individuals with further avenues in different phases of their lives and may significantly improve their self-esteem and motivate them for further learning and better employment perspectives. Quality assurance mechanisms should be underpinned by transparent processes, procedures, standards and criteria for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning.[34]

76. The UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning recognize the need for "the learning outcomes that young people and adults acquire in the course of their life in non-formal and informal settings ... to be made visible, assessed and accredited" (p. 5). The experiences and qualifications accumulated at different stages from participation in non-formal and informal adult learning and education should be recognized, validated and accredited. States should, in accordance with national qualifications frameworks, allow for "continuing education and access to the labour market, without facing discrimination barriers".[8]

B. Framework for the recognition and certification of skills

77. Qualification systems for connecting skills development and lifelong learning are especially important. During his recent visit to Chile, the Special Rapporteur was apprised of the national qualifications framework for technical and vocational training being developed in the country, which aimed to organize learning processes as a continuum that included standardizing the qualifications of students in the education system and promoting lifelong learning through the certification of skills and recognition of prior learning. The Ministry of Labour in Chile was increasing training in cooperation with the private sector to create opportunities and certify skills for employment, entrepreneurship and the emerging needs for lifelong learning.

78. The Special Rapporteur notes the initiatives being taken in some African countries to establish national qualifications frameworks. The national qualifications framework in South Africa provides a mechanism for awarding qualifications on the basis of the achievement of specified learning outcomes prescribed by industry. It allows for the accumulation of credits and recognition of prior learning, which fosters lifelong learning. The national vocational qualifications framework in Nigeria furnishes another example in addressing the assessment of vocational qualifications. Certification of skills relevant to the labour

[34] UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning, document UIL/2012/PI/H/3/Rev.2. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216360e.pdf.

market acquired through technical and vocational education and training is indeed important in the process of lifelong learning.

79. The Special Rapporteur also notes that recognition of prior learning is an important element in national qualifications frameworks. This has been recognized as a right in some countries. In France for example, the Social Modernization Act of 2002 makes access to validation of knowledge gained through experience a right for every person having at least three years of experience. In Norway, adults are entitled, by law,[35] to primary and lower secondary education and to validation of their prior learning.[36]

C. A holistic approach to quality education in qualifications frameworks

80. The European Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning underlines that "the validation of learning outcomes, namely knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning can play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as increasing motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socioeconomically disadvantaged or the low-qualified".[37] Validation has been presented as "a cornerstone in lifelong learning policies because of its potential to broaden access to, and increase participation in, lifelong learning".[38]

81. Recalling his earlier report to the Human Rights Council on the assessment of the educational attainment of students and the implementation of the right to education (A/HRC/26/27), the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that, in laying down the qualifications frameworks, a holistic approach to quality education is crucial so that this characterizes the assessment of knowledge, values, competencies and skills acquired with respect to each of the conceptual key pillars underlying lifelong learning: education, training and learning. Fostering the humanistic mission of education, rather than limiting it to its instrumental role and the mere pursuit of material values, should be central to any qualifications frameworks and assessment mechanisms. It is important to integrate that mission into all processes of lifelong learning and human values and foster those, along with the rights and responsibilities not only of individuals but also of all providers of education, training and learning. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur welcomes "growing international recognition of education for sustainable development as an integral

[35] Act No. 61 of 17 July 1998 relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training (Education Act), chap. 4A. Available from www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/42874aff99686718ce8c5a880e7851f51cf53633.pdf.

[36] See www.vox.no/English/Validation-of-prior-learning/.

[37] Preambular para. 1. See also European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, "2010 update of the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning: final report", available from http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/77643.pdf.

[38] European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, *Policy Handbook: Access to and Participation in Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET) in Europe*, Working Paper, No. 25 (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014), p. 43.

and transformative element of inclusive quality education and lifelong learning"[39] and its importance in learning assessments. He also notes the concept of "good living" (*sumak kawsay*) enshrined in the Constitution of Ecuador and reflected in the national curriculum, embodying respect for nature and harmony between nature and human life, which he witnessed during his visit to the country.

X. Information and communications technologies and lifelong learning

82. The Special Rapporteur notes that information and communications technologies (ICTs) open new paths to learning and access to technical information on various skills. "Blended learning" using digital devices brings together formal and non-formal ways of learning. Such technologies provide valuable support to lifelong learning processes. In addition to the formal and informal learning structures, the rapid rise of the Internet and ICTs is providing new learning modalities that can reach millions of students, regardless of their physical location. Open education resources allow students to have access to online educational materials, and online education and learning can provide added avenues for lifelong learning. ICTs have opened new paths to distance learning. A multiplicity of learning sites and modes exist for delivering technical and vocational education and training. As a result, such education and training is also provided in a "virtual learning environment" by means of Internet-based education and training and e-learning and e-training initiatives.

83. However, the costs of obtaining access to the Internet, as well as Internet-connected electronic devices and services, can be prohibitive for much of the world's population. As such, the State's obligation to provide learners with access to online learning with subsidized devices is an important consideration.

84. In addition, providers of dubious quality are using Internet-based education and training simply to cut costs by undermining teachers' working conditions, particularly in offshore provision.[40] Governments must take measures to regulate online educators and develop national qualifications frameworks and standards to allow learners to receive a quality education and to allow employers to value the credentials of their applicants and employees.

85. States must take measures to ensure that the social elements of education are not lost in the transition to online education provision.[41] Care must be taken to ensure that the negative effects of digital technology in education are addressed or mitigated. In his 2015 report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/32/37), the Special Rapporteur outlined a number of risks that emerge from online learning.

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[39] Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held from 10 to 12 November 2014 (A/70/228, annex), para. 6.

[40] Education International, report of the Education International task force on globalization, the General Agreement on Trade in Services and vocational education, 2007.

[41] Dejan Dinevski and Peter Kokol, "ICT and lifelong learning", *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, 25 October 2004. Available from http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2004/Dinevski.pdf.

XI. Financing lifelong learning

86. The Special Rapporteur deems social responsibility in education a guiding factor as regards resources to be devoted to lifelong learning. Although States have primary responsibility under human rights law for financing education, financing lifelong learning is a co-responsibility of public authorities, enterprises and social partners under the overall promotional and coordinating role of Governments.

A. Co-responsibility in financing lifelong learning

87. It is incumbent upon States to "create an economic environment and incentives, to encourage enterprises to invest in education and training".[12] In this respect, corporate social responsibility has a special significance. In addition, employers have a direct responsibility to provide training financing in a lifelong learning perspective. In the Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia (2011-2020), under the Lifelong Learning Award of Excellence initiative, it is proposed that relevant acts and regulations be amended "to make it compulsory for employers to fund their employees' lifelong learning activities".[42]

88. Under the overall role of State authorities, the social partners as stakeholders have a shared responsibility as regards financial support for providing opportunities for lifelong learning. In the field of technical and vocational education and training, industry partners can share that responsibility, either directly through co-sponsorship of schools or programmes or indirectly by contributing teaching resources, traineeships or job placement programmes.

89. In stipulating that "for the individual learner, lack of funds should not be an obstacle to participation in adult learning and education programmes", the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education expresses the moral obligation of all providers of adult learning. Member States may consider offering co-financing and setting incentives to facilitate learning. For example, individual learning accounts, subsidies (vouchers and allowances) and support for training leave for workers might be considered.

B. Financing, public incentives and support measures: some examples

90. The Special Rapporteur considers that developing a system of financing lifelong learning at the national level is highly important. For example, adult education in Scandinavian countries is largely publicly financed; such is the case with the adult vocational training programmes in Denmark. Low-skilled and skilled participants are entitled to a fixed allowance financed from the State Grant System for Adult Training. Companies paying regular wages to employees participating in adult vocational training programmes are entitled to receive grants instead.[43] The individual learning accounts, understood as "training accounts" or "development

[42] Malaysia, Ministry of Higher Education, *Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia 2011-2020* (Seri Kembangan, Malaysia, Univision Press, 2011), p. 48.

[43] See http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/Adult-education-and-continuing-training/Adult-vocational-training; see also European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, *Vocational Education and Training in Denmark: Short Description* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2012), p. 55.

accounts" and supported by the State, provide an incentive for individual investment in education.[44]

91. In France, a law adopted in March 2014 on vocational training, employment and social democracy created a "compte personnel de formation", replacing the previous "droit individuel à la formation". Such an account as a work contract, attached to the person, is meant to follow every person throughout his or her career. The account is funded through a shared investment between the State, regions and social partners.[45]

92. The Special Rapporteur commends the SkillsFuture credit, launched in Singapore to promote lifelong learning. Given to every Singaporean aged 25 years and older, it covers nearly 2.5 million citizens in the country. The first credit amounts to $500, with the proviso that the Government will top it up at regular intervals in future. The credit can be used for a wide range of courses. Already, there are 10,000 courses, in areas ranging from basic computing to web design, digital animation, human resources management, finance, health care and languages. The courses are provided at publicly funded tertiary institutions, as well as by private providers. The Government will provide employers with subsidies of 70 to 90 per cent when they train their employees. The credit is provided on top of SkillsFuture study awards in various fields. For example, for all Singaporeans aged 40 years and older, 90 per cent of the costs of their courses will be funded.[46]

C. Individuals as beneficiaries and cost-sharing

93. Financing of lifelong learning programmes is the responsibility of those who should provide learning opportunities: public authorities, the community or the private sector. It is also a responsibility to be assumed by individuals in situations when they seek to enhance their competencies and skills.

94. Governments can support learners in various ways, such as by mandating that employers provide educational leave for employees or paid training to upgrade skills and by encouraging more people to avail themselves of unpaid educational or training leave. During his recent visit to Fiji, the Special Rapporteur was informed that the Ministry of Education provided qualified teachers up to one year's paid leave to upgrade their qualifications. The Special Rapporteur also notes that the Government of Austria pays an allowance at the same rate as unemployment benefits to compensate for the income that has been forgone, and trainees receive a further training allowance (*Weiterbildungsgeld*) from the Employment Service equivalent to the level of unemployment benefit to which they are entitled.[47] In Finland, participants can also avail themselves of a grant equal to the unemployment benefit.

[44] For details, see European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, *Individual learning accounts* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2009). Available from www.cedefop.europa.eu/node/11054.

[45] For details, see www.cegos.fr/actualites/dossiers-thematiques/reforme-formation-professionnelle/Pages/compte-personnel-formation.aspx.

[46] Information provided by the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. See www.skillsfuture.sg.

[47] See www.migration.gv.at/en/living-and-working-in-austria/working/leave-annual-leave-parental-leave-etc.html.

95. A cost-sharing approach makes good sense under the principle that those who benefit should also pay. Learners will be motivated to make better choices when they are required to contribute to the cost of their education and training.[48] Technical and vocational education and training programmes that provide learners with the skills needed by industry and for gainful employment can be so devised as to allow learners to repay their education and training costs.

D. Technical and financial assistance for developing countries and international cooperation

96. Developing countries, especially the least developed countries, cannot meet the changing needs of learners in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies. Providing citizens with possibilities for engaging in lifelong learning is a challenging task. International cooperation for lifelong learning is thus critically important. The Special Rapporteur commends the concern expressed in this regard in the normative framework of ILO: "increase technical and financial assistance for developing countries and promote, at the level of the international financial institutions and funding agencies, coherent policies and programmes which place education, training and lifelong learning at the centre of development policies".[12]

XII. Conclusions and recommendations

97. The concept of education and learning as a continuum, no longer limited by age, is now globally recognized. As the Special Rapporteur has highlighted in the present report, education and learning are perceived as a continuing process, along with training as its valuable component. Those conceptual developments have led to the emergence of the right to learning, integrally linked with the right to education and training. The normative bases of adult or continuing education laid down in international human rights conventions have been expanded by instruments elaborated by UNESCO and ILO to endow lifelong education, learning and training with a legal framework. That evolution has also been followed in some countries, which have adopted education laws, policies and strategies on lifelong learning.

98. However, many countries still lag behind that evolution in embracing the concept of lifelong learning. They are not adequately equipped with a national legal framework or the policies and strategies necessary to direct their education systems towards lifelong learning.

99. It is incumbent upon Governments to advance in that direction, pursuant to the political commitments made in the Education 2030 agenda, as highlighted in the present report. This is imperative, given the crucial importance of the knowledge, competencies and skills needed by learners in the twenty-first century. Individuals everywhere should have possibilities for engaging in lifelong learning and for participating fully in their community, workplace and wider society.

[48] World Bank, *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy: Challenges for Developing Countries* (Washington, D.C., 2003), p. 79. Available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLL/Resources/Lifelong-Learning-in-the-Global-Knowledge-Economy/lifelonglearning_GKE.pdf.

100. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that, in this endeavour, paramount importance should be given to the "full development of the human person" as the essential objective of the right to education as a continuously unfolding process covering the entire life. The process of lifelong learning must also be propelled by a perception of the right to education not only as an individual right but also as a social right, with primary responsibility for its realization resting on Governments as well social partners.

101. In line with the above, the Special Rapporteur makes the recommendations below.

Elucidating further the concept of lifelong learning

102. States should embrace the concept of education and learning as a continuum. They should take steps towards transforming the education system so as to enable the continual pursuit of studies, learning processes and training programmes, through formal as well as informal systems. The concept of lifelong learning must be further elaborated, taking into consideration its three key pillars: education; training and learning; and ensuring that age is not a barrier to education and learning.

Strengthening the normative framework for lifelong learning

103. States should recognize the importance of developing and strengthening the normative framework for lifelong learning, taking into consideration the right to learning as well as the right to education and training. They should also recognize the right to education and learning as a social right and a social responsibility. They should develop a normative framework that reflects the right to education, learning and training. In this respect, consideration should be given to available examples. Moreover, the right to education, learning and training should be developed in its nexus with other rights. Governments should review labour laws so as to make them conducive to operationalizing the right to learning as well as the right to training.

Adopting and implementing polices and strategies for lifelong learning

104. In line with a normative framework, Governments should adopt the necessary policies and strategies for lifelong learning. A number of frameworks from countries mentioned in the present report may serve as inspiration but should be implemented in consultation with interested stakeholders to address each State's circumstances.

105. Furthermore, Governments should take special care that such policies and strategies are effectively implemented. The corporate sector, employers and social partners, including civil society and local communities, should be involved and encouraged to work with public authorities in designing programmes for lifelong learning.

Recognizing technical and vocational education and training as a linchpin in the concept of lifelong learning and fostering skills development

106. Technical and vocational education and training should be recognized as a linchpin in the concept of lifelong learning and as a font of skills development

and professional excellence. Countries should focus on fostering entrepreneurship through an overall lifelong learning framework. States, along with social partners and enterprises, should develop innovative approaches to technical and vocational education and training in order to respond to the diverse aspirations and needs of individuals and societies in a rapidly globalizing world.

Mobilizing resources for the financing of lifelong learning

107. Lifelong learning requires greater financial support, and must be given full consideration in investment in education. Governments should partner with stakeholders and take necessary measures aimed at innovative financial schemes to fund lifelong learning activities and programmes, with a focus on the active participation of the corporate sector and employers as well as employees in schemes devised for that purpose.

Recognizing information and communications technologies as support for lifelong learning processes

108. Recognizing the importance of ICTs as support for lifelong learning processes, Governments must foster open education resources that will allow students to draw upon online educational materials. They should work towards developing minimum quality standards. Care should be taken to ensure that technology does not exacerbate inequities or entail abusive practices. Fraudulent practices in online learning and certification must be punishable by law.

Adopting national qualifications frameworks and accreditation standards

109. States should develop national qualifications frameworks and ensure that all national education and training providers are subject to accreditation that measures the quality of education and training provided, according to national standards, with a focus on improving the competence and skills of learners. National qualifications frameworks must be revised to recognize and validate new skills and competencies acquired in the process of lifelong learning.

Operationalizing the normative framework for lifelong learning: advisory services by United Nations entities

110. UNESCO and ILO should reinforce their activities for operationalizing the normative framework for lifelong learning and provide technical assistance to States. They should also step up their advisory services for transforming education systems in a spirit of lifelong learning.

Fostering lifelong learning in the work of United Nations treaty bodies and the universal periodic review

111. The United Nations treaty bodies and States involved in the universal periodic review should enquire into how lifelong learning is being implemented, keeping in view the international normative framework for education, learning and training. They should also ensure that Governments abide by their responsibility undertaken under Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education

in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as pursuant to their commitments under the Education 2030 agenda.

Encouraging reflections and advocacy by the intellectual community and civil society organizations

112. **The intellectual community and civil society organizations should foster public debate on issues of key importance in lifelong learning. Research, events and expert consultations and advocacy on lifelong learning should be encouraged and supported for a greater understanding of lifelong learning and greater awareness of its importance in societies in the twenty-first century.**